



## **ANNOUNCEMENT!**

### **ICP begins Mobilizing Support in High-Growth Suburban Dallas to Overcome Housing Barriers**

Over the past months, the Inclusive Communities Project's (ICP) leadership has engaged in a strategic planning process designed to allow ICP to continue serving its mission while updating its theory of change, one that reflects the affordable and fair housing conditions in the Dallas, TX region. For the past fifteen years, ICP has pursued its mission of expanding housing opportunities for low income families throughout the region. This work has been done through supporting families who participate in the federal housing choice voucher program (Section 8) and desired to move into lower poverty, better resourced neighborhoods. Primarily funded by the Walker Housing Fund Charitable Trust, efforts entailed individual housing mobility counseling and move-related financial assistance to families. ICP's barrier-removal advocacy, including litigation, and its housing initiatives that supported development of affordable housing in historically off-limits areas have played essential roles to opening housing opportunities. These multi-pronged efforts have helped over 4500 families, primarily black women with children, live in more diverse, well-resourced neighborhoods.

Prior to ICP's efforts, voucher families were almost exclusively concentrated in high poverty neighborhoods within the City of Dallas. When ICP's Mobility Assistance Program came online in 2005, housing mobility, which was birthed by civil rights/fair housing litigation, was still a controversial concept. Since that time, the Dallas Metroplex has become more diverse with high growth in Dallas' neighboring counties. ICP families have chosen to move not only to less segregated parts of the City of Dallas, but throughout the Metroplex. While the high growth, well-resourced urban centers in Collin, Denton, Rockwall, and Dallas Counties have been the choice of most ICP families, more rural communities have also been choices for some — reflecting the fact that voucher families, like others have a wide range of preferences. Universal is the desire to have a safe, healthy, and welcoming place to raise children who are able to thrive in high performing schools and amidst well-resourced communities.

In particular, Collin County hosts some of the fastest growing municipalities. As employment hubs, these cities and towns attract high tech industries and an ethnically diverse, highly educated workforce from various parts of the country. Vast residential communities have been developed to house these new residents. As many employers and suburban planners have recognized, even "boomburbs" are dependent on a diverse workforce to fill a range of jobs including those paying lower wages. Due to longstanding discriminatory and exclusionary housing policies, these communities are too often devoid of housing affordable to lower wage workers.

Based on ICP's assessment of the Dallas region, the organization will continue assisting with voucher holders' housing searches but also begin mobilizing support to overcome barriers to affordable housing in Collin County in support of low income renters. This work will run parallel to the emerging voices within the county that are already speaking out against racial inequities. Residents of Collin County, including ICP clients, have an interest in ensuring these growing communities are seen as inclusive and welcoming to people regardless of race, ethnicity, religious preference, or income. ICP's work in the field of fair housing and neighborhood equity puts it in a unique position to further the cause of inclusion while working with allies who adopt this principle. The time is now for voices for opportunity and fair housing to be identified, mobilized and heard. ICP looks forward to continuing its work of combating residential segregation, racial injustices, and neighborhood inequities.